



Spatial Economics Research Centre

Monday, 28 July 2008

Regeneration

I have just finished working my way through CLG's new [Regeneration Framework](#).

The framework, which is currently out for consultation, is intended to help answer the "why, where, and what" questions about regeneration expenditure.

In terms of the why, the suggestion is that concentrating on pockets of, for example, unemployment, is important for empowering people and improving their economic prospects. The problem, according to the framework, is that while the significant investment made to date may have helped many people it has not actually done as much as it could to tackle the economic challenges facing disadvantaged communities (particularly worklessness).

Why should that be? Part of the answer, according to the framework, is that too much investment expenditure has gone on physical improvements (the "what") without regard to the specific problems facing neighbourhoods ("the where"). The suggested solution comes in several parts: Focus on outcomes (new jobs) not outputs (new buildings); Identify what might be good for particular neighbourhoods, depending on their circumstances (including what is going on in the wider local economy); Involve partners to do this.

Much of this seems eminently sensible. But there is a deeper question here that the framework is unable to address: Is regeneration the best way to tackle spatially concentrated deprivation? It might surprise you to find that there is almost no rigorous evidence on whether or not this is the case. That's why [SERC](#) is going to be researching issues relating to this [very question](#) as part of our ongoing research. We won't have our answers in time to influence the regeneration framework itself, but hopefully our findings will be available to help decide how it is implemented.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Monday, July 28, 2008](#)



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